

Volume 3. Air Operator Technical Administration

CHAPTER 16. CABIN SAFETY AND FLIGHT ATTENDANT MANAGEMENT

SECTION 4. FLIGHT ATTENDANT REQUIREMENTS

2295. NUMBER OF FLIGHT ATTENDANTS REQUIRED AT STOPS WHERE PASSENGERS REMAIN ON BOARD, 14 CFR SECTIONS 121.391 AND 121.393.

In 1985, John Cassady, Assistant Chief Counsel, Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), AGC-200, issued a legal interpretation that stated that during the boarding and deplaning process, all of the flight attendants required by Title 14 of the Code of Federal Regulations (14 CFR) part 121, § 121.391(a) must be on board the aircraft. During deplaning or boarding at all points, including an intermediate stop, the full FAA minimum flight attendant complement must be on board. The only time the number may be reduced, per §121.393(b) (formerly codified at § 121.391(3)) is when all the remaining on board passengers are continuing on to the next destination and at a time when no other passengers are deplaning or boarding. To view the most recent legal interpretation regarding this issue, go to: www.faa.gov/avr/afs/cabinsafety/legalinterpretations. It is the position of Flight Standards Service (AFS) that pending any amendment to § 121.393, the current regulations require the following:

A. During the passenger boarding and deplaning phase on each flight, all of the flight attendants required by section 121.391(a) must be on board the airplane.

B. During an intermediate stop where passengers remain on board, the number of required flight attendants, or persons trained in emergency procedures as per section 121.393(b)(2), may be reduced according to section 121.393(b). However, during the deplaning and boarding phase at an intermediate stop where passengers remain on board, all of the flight attendants required by section 121.391(a) must be on board the airplane.

2297. DISTRIBUTION OF FLIGHT ATTENDANTS.

Part 121 stipulates that flight attendants must be uniformly distributed throughout the operation of the flight. This includes when the aircraft is in-flight, parked at the gate, moving on the surface, taking off, and landing. The most important part of this requirement pertains to placing flight attendants in locations that will provide the most effective egress of passengers in the event of an emergency evacuation.

A. The purpose of this requirement is to avoid having several flight attendants assigned to a sparsely occupied

compartment when most of the passengers are grouped in another compartment having only one flight attendant.

B. Information regarding the required placement of flight attendants for takeoff and landing for an aircraft can be found in either the Type Certification Data Sheet or the Flight Standardization Board (FSB) report. For example, those documents require the stationing of flight attendants at both the 3L and 3R positions on the DC-10 and MD-11 aircraft. Principal operations inspectors (POI) may assist air carriers in obtaining this information by contacting the appropriate aircraft evaluation group (AEG).

C. The POI should not approve a change to the location of required flight attendant stations reflected in the Type Certification Data Sheets without the following actions:

(1) Carefully analyzing the “request for a change” in order to determine that the assigned evacuation duties of the flight attendants will meet the provisions of 14 CFR part 121. Consideration to change the location of the required flight attendant stations should be based on changes in the cabin configuration such as number of seats, location of galleys, or flight attendant duties.

(2) Consulting with the appropriate AEG should establish the reason for the location of the required flight attendant stations. In some aircraft, this location is quite critical while in others it may make little or no difference.

(3) Considering if a partial evacuation demonstration, as required by part 121, is necessary.

2299. DUTY ASSIGNMENT OF REQUIRED AND NON-REQUIRED FLIGHT ATTENDANTS.

Part 121 requires that, during taxi, the flight attendant complement required by section 121.391, remain at their duty stations with safety belts and shoulder harnesses fastened, except to perform duties related to the safety of the aircraft and its occupants. All flight attendants, even those in excess of the minimum crew complement, must keep their safety belts and shoulder harnesses fastened unless the flight attendant is performing duties related to the safety of the airplane and its occupants. These duties may include:

- Safety briefings
- Compliance checks of seat belt fastening
- Conducting passenger briefings

- Assuring passenger compliance with stowage of the food and beverage tray
- Assuring passenger compliance with the seat belt and no smoking placards/lights
- Checking for the proper stowage of carry-on baggage
- Attending distressed passengers
- Responding to emergency situations

NOTE: Because the pertinent regulation states that only required flight attendants may get up to perform safety related duties, technically those in excess of the required number were not able to get up during aircraft movement. Flight Standards Service has granted a petition for exemption that allows all flight attendants to perform safety related duties during movement on the surface when the number of flight attendants aboard a particular flight exceeds the number required by part 121. To view this exemption, go to the FAA's Automated Exemption System at <http://aes.faa.gov> and type "5533" in the blank "Search by Exemption" field.

A. Part 121 states the requirements used to determine the minimum number of flight attendants for each passenger-carrying airplane operated by an air carrier.

B. The flight attendants who make up the minimum complement, specified in the air carrier's operations specifications, must be fully trained in accordance with part 121, subpart N and qualified on that type airplane in accordance with subpart O.

(1) Some air carriers may use only the minimum number of flight attendants, while others occasionally or frequently use flight attendants in excess of the number required. Except in the case described in paragraph (2), the extra flight attendants must be trained and qualified in accordance with part 121, subparts N and O.

(2) A flight attendant in the process of meeting operating experience requirements would not yet be qualified and could not be used as a "required" flight attendant. Part 121 states, in part, "flight attendants receiving operating experience may not be assigned as a required crewmember."

C. Part 121 does not require the use of extra or non-required flight attendants. The capability to handle emergency situations and emergency evacuations is based on the complement of required flight attendants. The duties assigned to the required complement of flight attendants must be realistic, capable of being practically accomplished, and take into account the possible incapacitation of an individual crewmember.

D. If an air carrier uses more trained and qualified flight attendants than are required by part 121, then the air carrier should have a procedure whereby the flight attendants required to fulfill the regulatory requirements are

appropriately assigned. The extra flight attendants need to be identified.

E. The air carrier should evenly distribute extra flight attendants. The air carrier's manual should contain procedures which identify the required and non-required flight attendants. The air carrier should not assign duties to the extra flight attendants which would mandate their presence and duty assignment in the event of an emergency situation such as an evacuation.

2301. USE OF NON-FLIGHT ATTENDANT PERSONNEL IN AIRCRAFT CABINS. U.S. air carriers periodically use company employees in the cabins of its aircraft for the purpose of conducting certain passenger service activities such as serving beverages, conducting customer relations, or acting as translators. These persons are not assigned to flights to perform safety duties.

A. These company employees are not acting in the capacity of a flight attendant nor are they, in general, trained or qualified to act as a flight attendant.

B. The regulations do not prohibit the use of non-flight attendant personnel by an air carrier. However, their presence could conceivably interfere with the flight attendants, if they were not properly instructed. The following guidance should be considered when non-flight attendant personnel are used by an air carrier.

(1) *Status of Non-Flight Attendant Personnel.* Air carriers may use these individuals to perform activities limited to passenger service. They are a different category of cabin personnel and are not persons trained as flight attendants.

(2) *Applicable Regulations.* Non-flight attendant personnel are subject to the same provisions of part 121 as passengers. For example, they must receive a pre-takeoff briefing, they must be seated for movement on the surface, takeoff and landing, and they must stow their carry-on baggage as required by part 121. They must also comply with the seat belt requirements of part 121. They may not conduct any activities during movement on the surface.

(3) *Instruction.* These individuals should receive enough instruction so that they know what activities they may perform and equipment they may or may not operate so as not to interfere with the flight attendants. If they operate equipment they must carry the applicable parts of the flight attendant manual. The appropriate parts of the manual should provide enough information to ensure that they understand their duties and procedures, and to ensure that they do not interfere with the flight attendant's duties and procedures.

(4) *Assignment of Activities.* The activities assigned to these individuals should be clearly distinguishable from the duties assigned to the flight attendants. They should not be permitted to operate any equipment or systems for which specific training is required by part 121 (e.g., electrical galley equipment, heating and ventilation controls for the

cabin, and the public address system except to perform language translator duties for passenger briefings).

(5) *Identification of Non-Flight Attendant Personnel.* The air carrier may want to have these individuals distinguishable from the flight attendants. That could be

through the use of an identification card, a different uniform, or some other means.

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